September 2019 - CPWA Assignment #1

9/14 - Saturday Session CPWA Intro DUE
9/21 - Look for comments on your document in your folder
9/28 - Final Draft DUE

Review practice SAT and rubric
https://blog.prepscholar.com/how-to-get-a-perfect-sat-essay-score
https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/inside-the-test/essay

First Assignment (#1) - How does the author build an essay to persuade the audience?
CB Samples: https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sample-questions/essay/2

CPWA Assignment #1
Select one of the songs, carefully read the lyrics AND listen to the song.

- For whom is it written? How do you know?
- What are indications of historical context?
- What literary devices? HOW do they create meaning? How do they persuade?
- What does the author/songwriter want the reader to do? Think? Feel? Believe?
- How does the author/songwriter create meaning to persuade the reader/listener?

"No Shelter" by Rage Against the Machine

The main attraction - distraction
got ya number than number than numb
Empty ya pockets son; they got you thinkin that
What ya need is what they sellin
Make you think that buyin is rebellin
From the theaters to malls on every shore
Tha thin line between entertainment and war
The frontline is everywhere, there be no shelter here
Spielberg the nightmare works so push it far
Amistad was a whip, the truth was feathered and tarred
Memory erased, burned and scarred
Trade in ya history for a VCR

Cinema, simulated life, ill drama
Fourth Reich culture - Americana
Chained to the dream they got ya searchin for
Tha thin line between entertainment and war
There be no shelter here
Tha frontline is everywhere

Hospitals not profit full
Yet market bulls got pockets full
To advertise some hip disguise
View tha world from American eyes
Tha poor adore keep fiendin for more
Tha thin line between entertainment and war
They fix the need, develop the taste
Buy their products or get laid to waste
Coca-Cola is back in the veins of Saigon
And Rambo too, he got a dope pair of Nikes on
And Godzilla pure muthafuckin filler
To keep ya eyes off the real killer

Cinema, simulated life, ill drama
Fourth Reich culture - Americana
Chained to the dream they got ya searchin for
Tha thin line between entertainment and war

American eyes, American eyes....
View the world from American eyes
Bury the past, rob us blind
And leave nothin behind

Just stare
Relive the nightmare.

"Something Happening Here" by Buffalo Springfield

https://www.bing.com/search?q=buffalo+springfield+something+happening+here&qs=SS&pq=buffalo+springfield+&sk=HS1SS5&sc=8-20&cvid=512C1A40D49E4D9EB0CB716218AA2C93&FORM=QBRE&sp=7

“American Idiot” by Green Day

https://www.bing.com/search?q=green+day+american+idiot&qs=LS&pq=green+day+american+&sc=8-19&cvid=31E172C1DC574D9E9F37DD3479BFC282&FORM=QBRE&sp=1&ghc=1
October 2019 - CPWA Assignment #2

10/5 - First Draft DUE
10/12 - Look for comments on your document in your folder
10/19 - Final Draft DUE - Saturday Session Review

Why We Can’t Wait

This is an adaptation of a talk delivered February 26 at the National Press Club. Comments relating to policy are Dr. Hansen’s personal opinion and do not represent a NASA position.

There’s a huge gap between what is understood about global warming by the relevant scientific community and what is known about global warming by those who need to know: the public and policy-makers. We’ve had, in the past thirty years, one degree Fahrenheit of global warming. But there’s another one degree Fahrenheit in the pipeline due to gases that are already in the atmosphere. And there’s another one degree Fahrenheit in the pipeline because of the energy infrastructure now in place—for example, power plants and vehicles that we’re not going to take off the road even if we decide that we’re going to address this problem.

The Energy Department says that we’re going to continue to put more and more CO2 in the atmosphere each year—not just additional CO2 but more than we put in the year before. If we do follow that path, even for another ten years, it guarantees that we will have dramatic climate changes that produce what I would call a different planet—one without sea ice in the Arctic; with worldwide, repeated coastal tragedies associated with storms and a continuously rising sea level; and with regional disruptions due to freshwater shortages and shifting climatic zones.

I’ve arrived at five recommendations for what should be done to address the problem. If Congress were to follow these recommendations, we could solve the problem. Interestingly, this is not a gloom-and-doom story. In fact, the things we need to do have many other benefits in terms of our economy, our national security, our energy independence and preserving the environment—preserving creation.

First, there should be a moratorium on building any more coal-fired power plants until we have the technology to capture and sequester the CO2. That technology is probably
five or ten years away. It will become clear over the next ten years that coal-fired power plants that do not capture and sequester CO2 are going to have to be bulldozed. That’s the only way we can keep CO2 from getting well into the dangerous level, because our consumption of oil and gas alone will take us close to the dangerous level. And oil and gas are such convenient fuels (and located in countries where we can’t tell people not to mine them) that they surely will be used. So why build old-technology power plants if you’re not going to be able to operate them over their lifetime, which is fifty or seventy-five years? It doesn’t make sense. Besides, there’s so much potential in efficiency, we don’t need new power plants if we take advantage of that.

Second, and this is the hard recommendation that no politician seems willing to stand up and say is necessary: The only way we are going to prevent having an amount of CO2 that is far beyond the dangerous level is by putting a price on emissions. In order to avoid economic problems, it had better be a gradually rising price so that the consumer has the option to seek energy sources that reduce his requirement for how much fuel he needs. And that means we should be investing in energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies at the same time. The result would be high-tech, high-paid jobs. And it would be very good for our energy independence, our national security and our balance of payments.

But a price on carbon emissions is not enough, which brings us to the third recommendation: We need energy-efficiency standards. That’s been proven time and again. The biggest use of energy is in buildings, and the engineers and architects have said that they can readily reduce the energy requirement of new buildings by 50 percent. That goal has been endorsed by the US Conference of Mayors, but you can’t do it on a city-by-city basis. You need national standards. The same goes for vehicle efficiency. We haven’t had an improvement in vehicle efficiency in twenty-five or thirty years. And our national government is standing in court alongside the automobile manufacturers resisting what the National Research Council has said is readily achievable—a 30 percent improvement in vehicle efficiency, which California and other states want to adopt.

The fourth recommendation—and this is probably the easiest one—involves the question of ice-sheet stability. The old assumption that it takes thousands or tens of thousands of years for ice sheets to change is clearly wrong. The concern is that it’s a very nonlinear process that could accelerate. The west Antarctic ice sheet in particular is very
vulnerable. If it collapses, that could yield a sea-level rise of sixteen to nineteen feet, possibly on a time scale as short as a century or two.

The information on ice-sheet stability is so recent that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report does not adequately address it. The IPCC process is necessarily long and drawn out. But this problem with the stability of ice sheets is so critical that it really should be looked at by a panel of our best scientists. Congress should ask the National Academy of Sciences to do a study on this and report its conclusions in very plain language. The National Academy of Sciences was established by Abraham Lincoln for just this sort of purpose, and there’s no reason we shouldn’t use it that way.

The final recommendation concerns how we have gotten into this situation in which there is a gap between what the relevant scientific community understands and what the public and policy-makers know. A fundamental premise of democracy is that the public is informed and that they’re honestly informed. There are at least two major ways in which this is not happening. One of them is that the public affairs offices of the science agencies are staffed at the headquarters level by political appointees. While the public affairs workers at the centers are professionals who feel that their job is to translate the science into words the public can understand, unfortunately this doesn’t seem to be the case for the political appointees at the highest levels. Another matter is Congressional testimony. I don’t think the Framers of the Constitution expected that when a government employee—a technical government employee—reports to Congress, his testimony would have to be approved and edited by the White House first. But that is the way it works now. And frankly, I’m afraid it works that way whether it’s a Democratic administration or a Republican one.

These problems are worse now than I’ve seen in my thirty years in government. But they’re not new. I don’t know anything in our Constitution that says that the executive branch should filter scientific information going to Congressional committees. Reform of communication practices is needed if our government is to function the way our Founders intended it to work.

The global warming problem has brought into focus an overall problem: the pervasive influence of special interests on the functioning of our government and on communications with the public. It seems to me that it will be difficult to solve the global
warming problem until we have effective campaign finance reform, so that special interests no longer have such a big influence on policy-makers.

James Hansen, former director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, is adjunct professor in the department of earth and environmental sciences at Columbia University.

-----

- For whom is it written? How do you know?
- What are indications of historical context?
- What literary devices? HOW do they create meaning? How do they persuade?
- What does the author/writer want the reader to do? Think? Feel? Believe?
- How does the author/writer create meaning to persuade the reader?
What Would Lincoln Think of Race Relations on His 100th Birthday?

*The Nation’s* publisher writes about “the negro problem” during the very week he helped found the NAACP.

By [Oswald Garrison Villard](https://www.loc.gov/item/2014638235/)  (Library of Congress)

*This was an unsigned editorial in the* [February 18, 1909 Issue](https://www.loc.gov/item/2014638235/)

That there are discouragements enough in our national attitude toward the negro forty-four years after Lincoln’s death, cannot be denied. No one who took part in the celebration at Springfield, Illinois, last week can forget that but a year ago innocent negroes were butchered in the streets there because they were negroes. In the steady filching of the negro’s political rights, we tend to revert to that condition of half-slave, half-free which Lincoln declared to be intolerable. He would, we believe, be the first to
say that a native-born, educated—and often property-owning—American who is deprived of the ballot is defenseless before his enemies; and he would find illustrations without number to prove his contention. For Lincoln to see those same poor black creatures who swarmed about him when he reached Richmond after its fall, whose pathetic, hysterical joy over their savior from slavery he curbed with wise and kindly advice—to see these fellow-citizens now set apart in trains, street cars, and all public places, by an iron caste, would appall the greatest apostle of democracy.

Appall, but not discourage. When to his disappointment in 1856 but two persons came to the mass-meeting he had called at Springfield to ratify the Illinois anti-Nebraska Convention of 1856, he heartened himself by saying: “Under all this seeming want of life and motion the world does move, nevertheless. Be hopeful and now let us adjourn and appeal to the people.” So must those who to-day work in his spirit, so must the negroes themselves, appeal to the people in whose hearts still resides that sense of justice in which Lincoln never lost faith.

We wish the Lincoln celebration might have been marked by some great step forward for the colored people, not merely the endowment of this college or that hospital, but the creation by some of our philanthropists of a great fund, the income of which might be used for the intelligent help and guidance of the race. Why build a Lincoln boulevard from Washington to Gettysburg when money might be spent in ways far more useful and more grateful to the spirit of Abraham Lincoln?

Oswald Garrison Villard (1872–1949) first wrote for The Nation in 1894, when he was 21. In 1918, he became editor of The Nation, which he steered decisively to the left. Villard stepped down from the editorship in 1933 and published his memoir Fighting Years in 1939.

Oswald Garrison Villard (March 13, 1872-October 1, 1949) was a US journalist who wrote many articles for The Nation. He broke with the magazine in 1935 over its support for American intervention in Europe.
Higher Education

It’s Time to End Tuition at Public Universities—and Abolish Student Debt

In America today, people owe more on their student loans than they do on their credit cards. But there’s a simple and elegant way to end this travesty.

By Jon Wiener

The mother of all problems in higher education today is high tuition at public colleges and universities, which forces students into decades of debt and makes for-profit schools seem like a plausible alternative.

College used to be free at institutions like the University of California and other state schools not that long ago. In 2014, tuition was abolished in, of all places, Tennessee. And in January, Obama asked Congress to fund a plan making two-year community colleges tuition-free. That’s a good start, but we need more. Making four years of college free is not only fair; it’s also politically possible.

The University of California provides an example of the problem. In 2014, in-state tuition and fees for undergrads totaled $13,222 for one year. And UC isn’t even the most expensive public university: in-state tuition for the current school year at Penn State is $18,464. (The cheapest is the University of Wyoming, at $4,646 for one year.) As a result, two-thirds of college seniors now graduate with an average of $29,000 in student-loan debt. Students are told that incurring this debt is justifiable because a college education increases their earning power and boosts their “human capital”—which, they are told, is a financial advantage that goes beyond net worth. As Forbes explained it, student debt will provide “a solid return on your investment.”
That rationale suggests the ubiquity of market logic today. But there’s an alternative way of thinking: education is a public good. The purpose of education is not just to enable people to increase their lifetime incomes; it’s to help them understand the world, to stimulate the imagination and inspire creativity in all fields. A good society provides opportunities for everyone. We need educated people. And we should be willing to pay to educate them.

Why is tuition so high? The original sin of today’s public university systems can be found in the withering-away of state funding. This is a recent phenomenon: in Ronald Reagan’s campaign to become governor of California in 1966, he ran against the university, but he didn’t raise the tuition after he won. When Reagan left office in 1975, UC tuition cost only $647. It skyrocketed after 1990: $2,700 in 2000, $5,400 in 2005, almost $10,000 in 2010. In California, Democrats won a supermajority in the state legislature in 2012, which let them accomplish political tasks once considered impossible (for example, making abortion more accessible), and last year voters turned drug possession from a felony to a misdemeanor. But there have been no cuts in tuition; the Democrats agreed only to freeze the increases—and now they’ve declared that the freeze is coming to an end. In response, the UC Board of Regents recently voted to increase tuition by 5 percent per year for the next five years. For residents, the tuition would go from $12,192 now to $15,564.

There’s a simple, elegant solution to this travesty: tuition at public colleges should be free. You may say that’s impossible, but, as noted, it was free in California and other states just fifty years ago. You may say that was then, this is now. But college is free now in Sweden, Denmark and Finland, while in France, public universities are free for students from lower-income families, and those from higher-income families pay about $200 a year. You may say none of these countries provide a good model for the United States, and that once tuition goes up, it never comes back down. But what about Germany? It introduced tuition eight years ago, but over the last eight years, every state in Germany has abolished it.

How they did it provides a model for the United States, and it can be summed up in three words: protest and politics. Some preliminary facts: Germany has the fourth-largest economy in the world. Public higher education there is controlled and funded by sixteen autonomous state governments rather than the federal government. Following the American example, those state governments imposed tuition starting in
2005. But German citizens organized the Alliance Against Tuition Fees, which included not just student unions but trade unions and political parties. Students marched in the streets all over the country after the first seven states introduced fees. In Hamburg, they organized a fee strike; in the state of Hesse, which includes Frankfurt, they occupied the universities, and 70,000 people signed a petition in support. The Christian Democratic government in Hesse, facing an election in 2008, reversed course and promised to eliminate tuition. “Those state governments that followed Hesse’s lead in abolishing fees stayed in power,” Times Higher Education reported; “those that refused were removed from office at the next election.” Even in conservative Bavaria, 1.35 million voters—15 percent of the electorate—signed a petition opposing tuition, causing the state government to relent. If the conservative Christian Democrats in Germany—masters of austerity—can be pressured into eliminating tuition, why can’t the same thing happen with the Democrats in the United States, especially in places like California, Illinois and New York?

The US government already spends lots of money on student aid. Federal spending in 2014, the College Board reports, includes $47 billion in grants, $101 billion in loans and $20 billion in tax credits. “With that kind of dough,” says Anya Kamenetz of NPR, “there ought to be ways of buying better access and more equity.” One prominent proposal, from the Campaign for Free College Tuition, calls for offering a full college scholarship to every academically qualified student whose family makes less than $160,000 a year ($160,000 because even the middle class has gone into debt paying for college). Instead of federal Pell Grants and tuition tax credits, we’d create an entitlement: all young people who qualify for college can go for free.

Obama’s plan doesn’t go that far: he proposes that the federal government pay three-quarters of the cost of tuition for two-year public community colleges, and that states pay the rest. Students would have to be enrolled at least half-time, maintain a C-plus average, and “make steady progress toward completing a program.” If all fifty states agreed to fund the program, it could cover 9 million students and save each one about $3,800 a year. Republicans, of course, are not going to fund such an initiative, leading one GOP spokesman to label Obama’s proposal “more of a talking point than a plan.”

A little arithmetic suggests that the proposal would cost the federal government something like $25 billion a year, while the states would have to come up with another
$6 billion. Republicans and Democrats alike say we can’t afford it. But they stopped saying that in Tennessee in 2014: there, the legislature voted to make tuition and fees free for two years for all state high-school graduates who want to go to a community college or technical school. (Tuition there costs $4,000.) The State House of Representatives voted in favor of the bill 87 to 8; the vote in the State Senate was 30 to 1. And in case you were wondering, the Tennessee House has fifty-eight Republicans and twelve Democrats, while the Senate has twenty-seven Republicans and eight Democrats. The plan, available to students graduating from high school this year, has attracted almost 90 percent of the state’s seniors—more than twice as many as expected. There’s one other striking fact: in Tennessee, free tuition didn’t come after massive student protests; it was a Republican idea, touted as a “pragmatic” program, part of a “strategy that worked.”

If Tennessee can afford free tuition, so can everybody else. But how did Tennessee do it? Republican Governor Bill Haslam began by arguing that Tennessee needed more educated people, and set a goal of increasing the number of residents who hold a college degree from 33 percent today to 55 percent by 2025. The state will pay for it by creating a self-sustaining endowment of $300 million. Most of the money comes from a lottery fund, and the state legislature also voted to contribute $47 million.

Tennessee is not alone. A similar proposal in Oregon will be voted on when the new legislature is seated in 2015. Chicago also recently announced a free tuition program so that the city’s high-school students could attend two-year colleges, but Mayor Rahm Emanuel set so many prerequisites that only 3,000 of the city’s 20,000 high-school graduates qualify. Tennessee, in contrast, has no prerequisites: all high-school graduates are eligible (but they must enroll full-time and maintain a 2.0 GPA).

Making college free would have one additional benefit: it would drive the for-profit schools out of business. They now enroll 13 percent of those currently attending American colleges, or 2 million students. A Senate Education Committee report in 2012 released by Iowa Democrat Tom Harkin provided “overwhelming documentation of exorbitant tuition, aggressive recruiting practices, abysmal student outcomes, taxpayer dollars spent on marketing and pocketed as profit, and regulatory evasion and manipulation.” For-profit colleges represent predatory capitalism at its worst. Instead of
tightening regulations, as Obama has proposed, we could get rid of all for-profit colleges except those that provide real job skills not available at public schools.

Free tuition solves the problem for the future, but even if Obama’s proposal for two-year colleges were funded by the Republicans, that would still leave millions of young people (and their parents) crippled by student debt for decades to come. Student debt in America now famously exceeds credit-card debt, totaling more than $1 trillion. Here, Obama’s efforts have been woefully inadequate: his goal is not to abolish student debt, or even to reduce it, but rather to “make student debt more affordable and manageable to repay.” He has provided some repayment schemes and established a deal to forgive loans after twenty years of payments—at which time the remaining balance will be taxed as income! It gets worse: as author and activist Barbara Garson points out, “thanks to intense bank lobbying starting in the 1970s, student loans are uniquely punitive…. Unlike other loans, student loans can’t be discharged in bankruptcy.” Most can’t even be refinanced, which means that people who borrowed at 8 percent in the 1990s are still paying 8 percent—even though today’s rates are much lower. Senator Elizabeth Warren has introduced legislation to allow refinancing, but even if she got that through Congress, it would still leave debtors paying market rates. And it gets even worse: borrowers who go more than 270 days without making a payment on their federal student loans are deemed “in default,” and the Education Department pays nearly two dozen private debt collectors over $1 billion of taxpayer money annually to pursue the borrowers. Those targeted are subject to wage garnishments and the seizing of government benefits—Social Security can be garnished, and even disability checks.

A modest proposal: use that $1 billion not for debt collection, but for debt relief for student borrowers.

Occupy Wall Street activists have come up with a breathtaking strategy for providing immediate relief to student debtors. In mid-February, an Occupy offshoot called Rolling Jubilee announced that it was abolishing more than $13 million in debt originating from the for-profit Everest College, freeing more than 9,000 former students from that burden. The secret behind Rolling Jubilee is that defaulted debt is often sold for pennies on the dollar to debt collectors, who then try to collect the full amount. Rolling Jubilee declared itself a debt collector and purchased student debt on the open market—after raising money through small individual donations—and then notified the debtors that their debt was abolished. And a group of former students at the failing for-profit
Corinthian Colleges, Inc. have declared a debt strike. They are calling themselves the Corinthian 8, and their new organization Debt Collective. It’s the first time people have collectively refused to pay their federal student loans, and their goal, Astra Taylor explains, is “to build people/debtor power to attack the problem at the root.” Rolling Jubilee raises a question posed by Astra Taylor and Hannah Appel at the web publication TomDispatch: “If a ragtag group of activists can find a way to provide immediate relief to even a few thousand defrauded students, why can’t the government?”

Forgiving student debt has impressive popular backing: 1 million people signed a petition in support of the Student Loan Forgiveness Act in 2012, which was introduced by Michigan Democrat Hansen Clarke, with twenty-four co-sponsors. The benefits of student-loan forgiveness would extend well beyond the individuals involved. As Robert Applebaum of StudentDebtCrisis.org and StudentNation (at this magazine) argues, “Forgiving student loan debt would have an immediate stimulating effect on the economy.” Former students freed of debt payments would spend money; jobs would be created, and tax revenues would go up.

Occupy’s Rolling Jubilee, Republicans in Tennessee: you never know where you may find

----

- For whom is it written? How do you know?
- What are indications of historical context?
- What literary devices? HOW do they create meaning? How do they persuade?
- What does the author/writer want the reader to do? Think? Feel? Believe?
- How does the author/writer create meaning to persuade the reader?
January 2020 - CPWA Assignment #5

1/11 - First Draft DUE - Saturday session review
1/18 - Look for comments on your document in your folder
1/25 - Final Draft DUE

To His Coy Mistress by Andrew Marvell

"To His Coy Mistress" is a metaphysical poem written by the English author and politician Andrew Marvell (1621–1678) either during or just before the English Interregnum (1649–60). It was published posthumously in 1681. This poem is considered one of Marvell's finest and is possibly the best recognized carpe diem poem in English. (Wikipedia)

Had we but world enough, and time,
This coyness, Lady, were no crime.
We would sit down and think which way
To walk and pass our long love's day.
Thou by the Indian Ganges' side
Shouldst rubies find: I by the tide
Of Humber would complain. I would
Love you ten years before the Flood,
And you should, if you please, refuse
Till the conversion of the Jews.
My vegetable love should grow
Vaster than empires, and more slow;
An hundred years should go to praise
Thine eyes and on thy forehead gaze;
Two hundred to adore each breast;
But thirty thousand to the rest;
An age at least to every part,
And the last age should show your heart;
For, Lady, you deserve this state,
Nor would I love at lower rate.
But at my back I always hear
Time’s wingèd chariot hurrying near;
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.
Thy beauty shall no more be found,
Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound
My echoing song: then worms shall try
That long preserved virginity,
And your quaint honour turn to dust,
And into ashes all my lust:
The grave’s a fine and private place,
But none, I think, do there embrace.
Now therefore, while the youthful hue
Sits on thy skin like morning dew,
And while thy willing soul transpires
At every pore with instant fires,
Now let us sport us while we may,
And now, like amorous birds of prey,
Rather at once our time devour
Than languish in his slow-chapt power.

Let us roll all our strength and all

Our sweetness up into one ball,

And tear our pleasures with rough strife

Through the iron gates of life:

Thus, though we cannot make our sun

Stand still, yet we will make him run.

------

- For whom is it written? How do you know?
- What are indications of historical context?
- What literary devices? HOW do they create meaning? How do they persuade?
- What does the author/writer want the reader to do? Think? Feel? Believe?
- How does the author/writer create meaning to persuade the reader?
February 2020 - CPWA Assignment #6

2/8 - First Draft DUE - Saturday session review
2/15 - Look for comments on your document in your folder
2/22 - Final Draft DUE

What Don’t American Kids Learn in History Class?

Some of the strongest evidence that our country needs structural change, that our problems go much deeper than one white nationalist president, lies in history that is rarely taught to young Americans.

By Abe Asher, September 5, 2019

Fred Hampton, chairman of the Illinois Black Panther party, speaks at a protest against the trial of eight persons accused of conspiracy to cause a riot during the 1968 Democratic National Convention. (AP Photo / stf)
At the end of July 2019, a group of coal miners in Harlan County, Kentucky, began organizing to demand millions of dollars in unpaid wages from Blackjewel, the bankrupt coal company that formerly employed them. The workers set up a protest site, camped on railroad tracks to block a train of coal cars from leaving a Blackjewel mine, rallied support on social media, and may soon, with the sale of several of the company’s assets in the area, see a measure of relief.

It’s a story that stretches back more than 100 years in Appalachia, spanning the formation of the United Mine Workers of America, the battles that raged at places like Blair Mountain, and the long, often bloody struggle to secure decent conditions for people doing hazardous work in an exceptionally profitable industry.

It’s a significant part of American history—history that actualizes concepts like class and poverty in ways that may well connect with the lived experiences of some students and expand the worldviews of others. And yet it is by no means a central part of American history curricula. Even Rand Paul, who represents Kentucky in the Senate, was unfamiliar with the labor movement in Harlan County when he first ran for his seat in 2010.

Labor history does not get a great deal of attention in most schools. Not Pullman, not Boston, not the movement that led to the establishment of the weekend, or the 40-hour workweek, not union busting or “right to work” laws.

It’s not just labor history. The standard American history curriculum in middle and high schools all too often engages more in hagiography than in an effort to help people better understand why their country, whatever its stated ideals, looks and behaves as it does.

That is what studying the past should do: help to explain the present.

People who know that seasonal workers used to arrive in the Southwest from Mexico each spring and depart each fall, or are familiar with our predilection for destructive antidemocratic intervention in Central America, may understand the current situation at our southern border much differently.

People familiar with the massacres at Fort Pillow and Greenwood, with the history of lynching in the South and race riots in the North, may see the ongoing assault on black and brown bodies by American police officers through a different lens.
People who understand the history of redlining may move through their own cities with new interpretations of them and how the forces of racism and bigotry have shaped their own lives.

People familiar with poll taxes and literacy tests may respond differently to voter identification laws and voter roll purges, or to the refusal of a candidate like Stacey Abrams to concede a gubernatorial election like the one that took place in Georgia last year.

People who know that Philadelphia police blew up the MOVE home in 1985, or who know that Chicago police murdered Fred Hampton in 1969, will necessarily interpret differently the fact that six leading activists in Ferguson have died since Michael Brown was killed there in 2014.

What is happening in this country in 2019 is not by any means inexplicable. Donald Trump, despite what Joe Biden might have you believe, is not an anomalous, ahistorical force. The Republican Party’s submission to white nationalism was not sudden. History demonstrates this clearly. Back in 1971, Ronald Reagan and Richard Nixon were guffawing after Reagan cracked that African delegates to the United Nations—“monkeys”—were “still uncomfortable wearing shoes.”

Of course, given the breadth and depth of American history, what we teach in classrooms is largely a question of what to prioritize. In that process, we often overlook much of what is vital to seeing clearly the society we have built. Students are drilled on the names of the founding fathers and the particulars of the Virginia Plan, but left ignorant of our country’s history of domestic fascism—how many Americans could identify Madison Square Garden as the venue for a massive Nazi rally in 1939? It is a question not just of knowing history but also of equipping young people with the tools to interrogate the world they live in.

This, of course, is an ideological judgment. But history classes are nothing if not a series of ideological judgments, valuations of the merits of the many histories and narratives that coexist in this country, and choices about which of them to present and how.
This story was produced for Student Nation, a section devoted to highlighting campus activism and student movements from students in their own words. For more Student Nation, check out our archive. Are you a student with a campus activism story? Send questions and pitches to Samantha Schuyler at samantha@thenation.com. The Student Nation program is made possible through generous funding from The Puffin Foundation.

-----

- For whom is it written? How do you know?
- What are indications of historical context?
- What literary devices? HOW do they create meaning? How do they persuade?
- What does the author/writer want the reader to do? Think? Feel? Believe?
- How does the author/writer create meaning to persuade the reader?
Is Privacy Obsolete?

John Hooker Carnegie Mellon University Published in World’s Most Ethical Companies Executive Briefing Ethisphere, August 2014

We are told that the surveillance society is here to stay, and we just have to get used to it. What’s more, this is a good thing, because openness and transparency are healthy. Members of the younger generation know this instinctively and consequently don’t care about privacy. They eagerly display their personal lives on social networking sites, and if someone out there records their every mouse click and iPhone text, so much the better. They like the individually tailored information and ads.

Besides, privacy can’t be an essential part of our humanity, because there are cultures in which it doesn’t exist. Some people live in close quarters with other families in a single dwelling and have intimate knowledge of each other’s affairs. If they don’t need privacy, why do we?

Constant surveillance is undeniably a fact of modern life. Internet service providers record every website we visit, smartphones relay our locations to the nearest antenna, ubiquitous video cameras peer at us, and retailers record every purchase and track our movements as we shop. License-plate readers follow our cars, smart TVs register what we are watching (and will soon watch us), and who knows what the NSA is doing. All the while, sophisticated data mining algorithms prowl social networks and databases to assemble dossiers on countless individuals.

Maybe we should step back and think about the ethics of all this. Is privacy really optional? Is it really OK for marketing firms and the government to monitor our lives? Do philosophers and ethical thinkers have anything to say about it?
Let’s start with the attitudes of young people. They love to post Facebook selfies, but anyone who thinks adolescents don’t care about privacy should try walking into a teenage son or daughter’s room unannounced. In fact, many are fleeing from Facebook to other platforms because their parents are on Facebook. According to a May 2013 report by the Pew Internet and American Life project, most teens are careful about privacy settings, routinely delete old posts, and use code language to disguise the true meaning of their messages. They clearly care about privacy when they see an immediate impact on their lives—and sometimes when they don’t. A June 2013 poll by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press found that young people actually place more weight on privacy, relative to national security, than older generations.

Anthropologists tell us that every society on earth respects privacy, albeit in different ways. People who live in close quarters, for example, have any number of mechanisms to secure privacy. They may have a secluded retreat in the woods from which others keep their distance. Certain buildings may be forbidden to women or men. Families may take care not to intrude on another family’s space in a common dwelling, and partitions may be erected at sensitive times like childbirth. There may be strict taboos about asking personal questions, and people may lie on a regular basis to avoid revealing personal information.

Part of the explanation for this is that privacy affords a zone of trust and safety within which intimacy can develop, and intimacy is necessary for family life and therefore survival. Yet many philosophers see a deeper explanation: the connection between privacy and autonomy, which is the capacity for self-determination. These philosophers argue that part of being human is having a certain amount of control over our lives, which requires some kind of personal space where we are in charge.

What if our minds were constantly open to scrutiny by strangers? We would be self-conscious about every thought, and it would be impossible for us to be ourselves. We would become objects manipulated by others rather than autonomous beings. It would be the same if our bodies were constantly exposed, or if our personal space were open for the curious to invade anytime. We all need a sanctuary within which we can safely be who we are, not only for psychological health, but because having a self is part of what it means to be human.
Nowadays, we live much of our lives in the electronic infosphere that permeates our environment. Yet there is no private space in this infosphere. It may feel private at first, particularly to teens alone with their phones or adults who are unaware of pervasive surveillance. But as we become more aware of it, we must somehow carve out private space, if necessary by shutting down the phone and the tablet.

As we increasingly transfer our lives to the infosphere, we make available a wealth of data that can be put to good use as well as ill. Yet we must have areas that are safe from prying eyes, not only to avoid identity theft and other harms, but to safeguard our autonomy. This is the ethical challenge in our age of surveillance.

-----

● For whom is it written? How do you know?
● What are indications of historical context?
● What literary devices? HOW do they create meaning? How do they persuade?
● What does the author/writer want the reader to do? Think? Feel? Believe?
● How does the author/reader create meaning to persuade the reader?
March/April 2020 - CPWA Assignment #8

3/21 - First Draft DUE - Saturday Session Review
3/28 - Look for comments on your document in your folder
4/4 - Final Draft DUE

People often say that they have the right to this and that - clean water and air, education and healthcare, free speech and fair trials. Find an essay that was written within the last five years that argues for or against a right. Write your essay about that right and be prepared to present during Saturday session. Next, write your SAT essay about the essay you selected and presented.

--------

● For whom is it written? How do you know?
● What are indications of historical context?
● What literary devices? HOW do they create meaning? How do they persuade?
● What does the author/writer want the reader to do? Think? Feel? Believe?
● How does the author/writer create meaning to persuade the reader?

April 2020 - CPWA Assignment #9

4/11 - Self-Evaluation DUE
4/18 - Peer Evaluation DUE
4/25 - Evaluation Discussion/Metacognitive Reflection - Saturday Session DUE BY THE END OF CLASS